

XIII. PERSONNEL QUALIFICATIONS

It is the policy of the State of Iowa to ensure that personnel necessary to carry out the requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act are appropriately and adequately prepared and trained, including that those personnel have the content knowledge and skills to serve children with disabilities.

Further, it is the policy of the State of Iowa to require certification, licensing, and professional recognition qualifications for all personnel employed to provide special education and related services. These requirements are in the rules of the Iowa Board of Educational Examiners.

The qualifications for related services personnel and paraprofessionals:

- are consistent with State-approved certification, licensing, registration, or other comparable requirements that apply to the professional discipline in which those personnel are providing special education or related services;
- ensure that related services personnel who deliver services in their discipline or profession meet the requirements of the previous item and have not had certification or licensure requirements waived on an emergency, temporary, or provisional basis; and
- allow paraprofessionals and assistants who are appropriately trained and supervised in accordance with Iowa law to be used to assist in the provision of special education and related services under this part to children with disabilities.

The qualifications for special education teachers, as outlined below, meet the “highly qualified” requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004. The State of Iowa ensures that each person employed as a special education teacher in the state who teaches elementary school, middle school or secondary school is highly qualified by the end of the 2005-2006 school year.

The term “highly qualified” in Iowa means for teachers to demonstrate competence in the subject areas they teach through appropriate licensure and endorsement. Additionally, a highly qualified special education teacher:

- has obtained full State certification as a special education teacher;
- has not had special education certification or licensure requirements waived on an emergency, temporary, or provisional basis; and
- holds at least a bachelor's degree.

Iowa special education teachers who teach core academic subjects exclusively to children who are assessed against alternate achievement standards may either demonstrate competence in the subject area they teach by meeting the requirements outlined above as an elementary or secondary teacher, or, in the case of instruction above the elementary level, have subject matter knowledge appropriate to the level of instruction being provided. Special education teachers who teach 2 or more core academic subjects exclusively to children with disabilities may meet the requirements outlined above.

Special education teachers who are not new to the profession must meet the highly qualified requirements by the end of the 2005-06 school year. New special education teachers who teach multiple subjects and who are highly qualified in mathematics, language arts, or science, must demonstrate competence in the additional core academic subjects in which they teach not later than 2 years after the date of employment.

The State of Iowa has adopted a policy that includes a requirement that local educational agencies in the State take measurable steps to recruit, hire, train, and retain highly qualified personnel to provide special education and related services under this part to children with disabilities.